its meeting held on 11.1.2007. The Cabinet has referred the Policy to Group of Ministers (GoM). The First meeting of the GoM was held on 10.4.2007 and the Second meeting was held on 12-9-2007. No time-frame has been set for finalizing the National Pharmaceuticals Policy.

Release of outstanding fertilizer subsidy

†559. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to release the outstanding amount of subsidy of fertilizers for more than Rs. 25 thousand crores;

(b) if so, the amount of subsidy released to far;

(c) by when, the remaining amount of subsidy would be released;

(d) whether Government proposes to review the present system of subsidy on fertilizer; and

(e) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) to (c) The release of subsidy on sale of fertilizers is a continuous process and a total of Rs. 25033.92 crore has already been released till 14th November, 2007 in the current financial year.

(d) and (e) A Group of Ministers has been formed to look into sustainable use of fertilizers and pertinent subsidy and pricing issues. The GoM is looking into various issues pertaining to fertilizer sector including the review of present system of subsidy on fertilizers. The recommendations of GOM are not yet finalised.

Subsidy distribution

560. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is examining the feasibility of implementing alternate subsidy mechanisms;

(b) if so, state whether nutrient based subsidy mechanism, in place of giving direct subsidy to farmers, would be preferred by Government;

(c) if so, the details of the decision taken for the said purpose; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI B.K. HANDIQUE): (a) to (d) A Group of Ministers has been formed to look into sustainable use of fertilizers and pertinet subsidy and pricing issues. The GoM is looking into various issues pertaining to fertilizers sector including the issue of direct subsidy on fertilizers to farmers. The recommendations of GoM are not yet finalised.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.